

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE # 2006-0300

BAR Meeting
April 25, 2007

ISSUE: After-the-fact Alterations

APPLICANT: Bryan Sory

LOCATION: 326 North Payne Street

ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the front windows be replaced with wood windows, with wood trim, either one-over-one or two-over-two according to the applicant's preference, and that, if two-over-two, they be true-divided light;
2. That the front door be replaced with an appropriate door, either a four-panel wood door or a two panel with glass above;
3. That the wood grained Hardiplank be removed and replaced with a smooth finish wood siding;
4. That the new fence on the front be removed, and that should the applicant desire to replace a fence, seek an encroachment permit from the City Council and bring an appropriate fence design that meets the Design Guidelines;
5. That the storage shed be removed or relocated to the rear parking area so as to not violate the required open space;
6. That the brackets on the front cornice should be at least paired and mimic the rhythm found on the block and
7. That all of the above work be completed within six months from the date of approval.

(Insert sketch here)

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a certificate of appropriateness for after-the-fact alterations to the two-story attached, framed house at 326 North Payne Street. Based on staff's observations, the following alterations were made prior to approval:

Windows: The existing windows were replaced with one-over-one, double-hung vinyl windows. According to the applicant, the unusual narrowness of the window opening dimensions was a pre-existing condition from when the property was purchased. The windows that were removed and replaced were also one-over-one double-hung windows.

Front Door: The front door was removed and replaced with a metal six panel door. The type and age of the previous door is not known. In discussions with staff, the applicant has expressed willingness to replace the metal door with an appropriate four panel wood door.

Exterior Siding: According to submitted photographs and the applicant, the previous siding was asphalt shingle with vinyl trim around the windows. The applicant removed the prior siding and replaced with a wood grain concrete-composite siding.

Rear Shed: A pre-fabricated wood storage shed has been installed within the rear yard of the property. The shed measure 8'4" in height to the roof ridge. The shed has been installed within the required open space for the property and also encroaches on the adjacent property of 324 North Payne Street.

Front Fence: An existing chain link fence was removed and replaced with a new 4' tall wood fence constructed of pressure treated lumber. The existing fence now encroaches on the city right-of-way and would require an encroachment permit by City Council in order to remain. While the fence is inline with other existing fences, the property line for 326 North Payne Street actually begins at the façade of the house as shown on the survey plat.

Cornice: The front Italianate influenced cornice has been altered. The brackets that are now shown are not scaled appropriately for the façade. The brackets should be paired and mimic the rhythm found on the block.

II. HISTORY:

326 North Payne Street is a two-story framed attached town house with a flat roof and an Italianate influenced cornice, characteristic of much of the historic residential structures found in the Parker-Gray Historic District, constructed between the end of the 19th-century and early 20th century. 326 North Payne Street appears on the 1902 Sanborn map. The 300 block of North Payne was not included in the earlier Sanborn maps.

Staff could not locate any prior Board approvals for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

Staff regrets that the work before the Board was completed without the benefit of staff guidance and BAR review. Unfortunately, most of the items of work are not compatible to a late 19th-

century/early 20th-century house and the Design Guidelines and, in the opinion of staff, must be addressed:

Windows: The new windows are problematic in that vinyl windows are not recommended by the Design Guidelines for any windows visible from the public right-of-way, within the historic district, much less on a historic property as well as on the front façade: “Discouraged window types: plastic, vinyl and metal windows, plastic, vinyl, and metal clad window.” The Design Guidelines clearly speak to the importance of windows in defining the historic architectural style of the building: “New and replacement windows should be appropriate to the historic period of the architectural style of the building. For example, two-over-two or two-over-one windows are appropriate on Victorian style buildings dating from the late 19th to early 20th-century.” Therefore, staff recommends that the applicant replace the front windows with wood windows, with wood trim, either one-over-one or two-over-two according to the applicant’s preference, and that, if two-over-two, they be true-divided light.

Doors: The six panel metal door should be replaced with an appropriate door for this historic building: either a four panel wood door or a wood door with a glass over a two panel should be used.

Siding: While the photographs submitted by the applicant demonstrate that asphalt shingle was the pre-existing siding, it is unknown if historic wood siding was found underneath the asphalt shingle and without staff having the ability to make a determination what condition the sub layer of wood may have been. The new siding of a wood grain Hardiplank is problematic. The Boards have adopted the following policy on the use of fiber cement:

1. That fiber cement siding not be installed on an historic structure;
2. That historic materials should not be removed to install fiber cement siding;
3. That fiber cement siding replace other artificial or composite siding;
4. That the nails not show in the installation of the siding; and
5. That smooth, (non-simulated wood grain) siding be installed; and
6. That BAR staff may administratively approve the installation of fiber cement siding on non-historic buildings (those constructed in 1975 or later).

Therefore, because the siding on the front façade does not meet the requirements of the Board’s policy on fiber cement/Hardiplank, staff recommends that the applicant remove the current siding and replace with a smooth finish wood siding on the front façade.

Rear shed: While prefabricated sheds are not generally recommended in the historic districts, the applicant’s shed is constructed of wood, rather than rubber or other synthetic materials. However, in its current location within the fenced-in rear yard, the shed is violating the required open space for the property. The zoning administrator has indicated to staff that the shed could be relocated to the rear parking area of the property, which would not count against the required open space. Also, staff notes that the alley immediately located behind the property is a private alley so if relocated out of the required open space, the shed would only minimally be visible from any public rights-of-way. Therefore, staff recommends that the shed be removed or relocated to the rear parking area of the property, off the rear alley.

Front Fence: The front fence is not an appropriate design found with a historic residential property within the Parker-Gray Historic District. The height of 4' is problematic in that front fences are generally not taller than 3'6". Furthermore, by removing the pre-existing chain link fence, the new fence now encroaches in its entirety on the public right-of-way and would require an encroachment permit by the City Council. Therefore, staff recommend that the existing front fence be removed, and if the applicant desires a front fence, he may seek an encroachment permit from the City Council and submit a fence design that is appropriate and in keeping with the Design Guidelines.

Cornice: The brackets should be paired and mimic the rhythm found on the block.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the front windows be replaced with wood windows, with wood trim, either one-over-one or two-over-two according to the applicant's preference, and that, if two-over-two, they be true-divided light;
2. That the front door be replaced with an appropriate door, either a four-panel wood door or a two panel with glass above;
3. That the wood grained Hardiplank be removed and replaced with a smooth finish wood siding;
4. That the new fence on the front be removed, and that should the applicant desire to replace a fence, seek an encroachment permit from the City Council and bring an appropriate fence design that meets the Design Guidelines;
5. That the storage shed be removed or relocated to the rear parking area so as to not violate the required open space;
6. That the brackets on the front cornice should be at least paired and mimic the rhythm found on the block; and
7. That all of the above work be completed within six months from the date of approval.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

No comments.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.